

In the Specification

At page 1, lines 6 – 9, please replace the paragraph as follows (underlined denotes replacements additions and strikethough notes deletions):

This is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/431,659 (~~USBA.008P1~~) filed on December 6, 2002 and entitled “Tracking and Reporting Freight Shipment Timing,” to which priority is claimed under 35 U.S.C. §120 for common subject matter.

At page 1, lines 10 – 16, please replace the paragraph as follows (underlined denotes replacements additions and strikethough notes deletions):

This is also a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application 09/527,717 (~~USBA.004PA~~) filed on March 17, 2000, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/522,745 (~~USBA.003PA~~), now U.S. Patent No. 6,697,702 converted from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/124,124 filed March 12, 1999, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/748,243 (~~USBA.002PA~~) filed November 12, 1996 and now U.S. Patent No. 5,910,896, all of which are incorporated herein by reference.

At page 4, lines 8 – 24, please replace the paragraph as follows (underlined denotes replacements additions and strikethough notes deletions):

As discussed above, the traditional approach to transaction management can lead to many challenges for a transaction between one shipper and one carrier. Typically, however, there are multiple carriers and shippers involved in multiple transactions, as well as other parties to a transaction between a shipper and carrier, which makes the situation more complex and correspondingly slow and inefficient. The transaction process is manually intensive in that it relies on transaction documents, such as ~~(such as~~ a hard copy of a BOL) for proof of delivery and payment, resulting in a series of repetitive and time consuming steps. Also, in the instance of BOL documents, each BOL is often rated multiple times by multiple parties creating excessive redundancy.

At page 6, lines 26 – 30 and page 7, lines 1 – 5, please replace the paragraph as follows (underlined denotes replacements additions and strikethough notes deletions):

In another example embodiment of the present invention, a transaction auditing system for a business transaction involving at least two remotely-situated parties includes a central processing arrangement adapted to use transaction event data to audit transactions. Aspects of the business transaction including specified events that would occur at different times are stored, with information indicative of a status of the transaction being provided. Confirmation of at least two of the specified events is received from different remotely-situated parties and data indicative of the time elapsed between the specified events is recorded. The central processing arrangement uses the stored aspects and the recorded data to provide information corresponding to the status of a business transaction between the at least two parties.

At page 17, lines 27 – 30 and page 18, lines 1 – 12, please replace the paragraph as follows (underlined denotes replacements additions and strikethough notes deletions):

FIG. 2 shows a system 200 for shipping transaction processing, according to another example embodiment of the present invention. A shipper terminal 220 including a shipper processor 232 having a BOL rating engine initiates a shipment transaction to generate a rated BOL. The shipper terminal 220 may include, for example, a simple computer terminal and/or be representative of a network of terminals for a particular shipper entity. Transaction information including the rated BOL is sent to a central processor 240 that identifies and centrally tracks the transaction information. A carrier terminal 230 including a processor 246 receives proof of delivery information and sends this information to the central processor 240 along with a timing characteristic (e.g., time of the receipt of goods). The carrier terminal 230 may, for example, be a simple computer terminal and/or be representative of a network of terminals for a particular shipper entity, and in some instances, involves a mobile terminal that can be used by truckers and others performing the shipment. The central processor 240 processes and stores all pertinent shipment information including the timing characteristic in a data storage arrangement 242 and controls access to this information by the shipper 220, the carrier 222, and other authorized users.